CURSOR

Registered by Australia Post
Publication No. QBG 3958

Vol.5 No.4 - NOVEMBER 1988

NEWSLETTER of the COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.

AMIGA EDITION

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MEETINGS - WHERE & WHEN

MAIN MEETING: Tuesday 1st November 1988 in the Bardon Professional Development Centre, 390 Simpsons Road, Bardon. Entrance is through the Centre's Car Park in Carwoola Street. Library hours: 7pm - 8pm and 9pm - 9.30pm. Sales: 7pm - 8pm. Main Meeting: 8pm - 10pm.

VERSION 1.3 OF THE OPERATING SYSTEM
(this Talk/Demo is conditional upon the *official* release of the 1.3 system disks.)

AMIGA WORK SHOP: Sunday 13th November 1988 (1pm - 5 pm) in the Ithaca R.S.L. Hall, corner of Nash & Elizabeth Sts., Rosalie.

Work Shop Sessions for Beginners and Programmers
Amiga Special Interest Groups (Video, Sound, etc.)

Opportunity to purchase Disks, Disk Boxes and other Accessories.
Further information: Ph. Bruce Wylie - (075) 489 038 (a.h.) or Steve McNamee - 262 1127 (a.h.)

REGIONAL MEETINGS

CANNON HILL: Last Saturday of the month (12 noon - 12 midnight) in the Cannon Hill State School. Ph. Don Friswell - 343 1735 a.h.
KINGSTON: 2nd Friday of the month (7pm - 10pm) in the Kingston State School. Ph. Peter Martin - 290 1537 a.h.
PINE RIVERS: 1st Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Strathpine State High School. Ph. Barry Bean - 269 7390 a.h.
SHERWOOD: 2nd Friday of the month (7.30pm) in the Graceville State School. Ph. Leigh Winsor - 379 2405 a.h. / Philip Parkin - 818 1172 a.h.
WAVELL HEIGHTS: 2nd Tuesday of the month (7.15pm - 9.45pm) in the Wavell State High School, Childers St. Entrance. Ph. Cor Geels - 263 2839
SUNSHINE COAST meets regularly. For meeting times, dates, places: Ph. Harvey Riddle - 071 / 421 036 or Ph. Vic Mobbs - 071 / 941 330
MARYBOROUGH/HERVEY BAY: 4th Monday of the month (7pm - 10 pm) in the Sunbury State School, Alice St. Ph. Terry Baade - 071 / 215 059 a.h.

Copying of Commercial Software is NOT allowed at our Meetings!

GOODS & SERVICES

[Available at Main Meeting or by Mail Order]

BLANK DISKS 5¼" (DS/DD) - $10.00 per 10 (+ $2.00 Postage)
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P.O. Box 274, Springwood, Q'ld, 4127

"CURSOR" COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING RATE:

$30.00 per full page, per issue.
[All artwork etc. to be supplied by the advertiser.]

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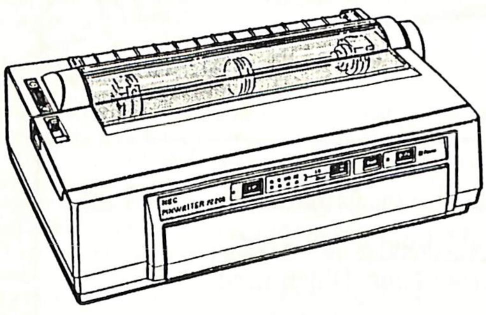

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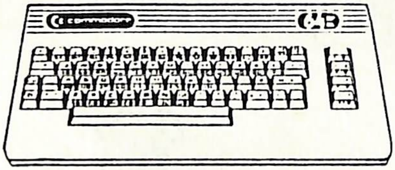

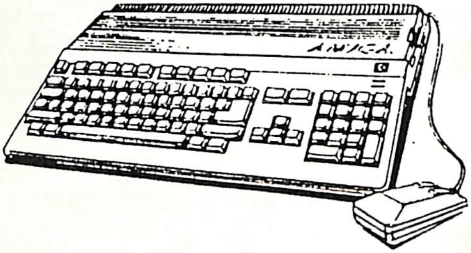

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(all boards must be in serviceable condition)

Special Rates for Users Group Members!

EDITOR'S NOTES

THE BBS

Great cries of joy have gone up - I have become a tele-communications convert! Steve McNamee, Greg Shea and Jim Vick all love me now! The reason is quite simple really; we have a new BBS. I leave it to Jim Vick to give you all the details, but suffice it to say that the OPUS software that we run is easy to understand and is an industry standard. I, for one, am pleased to find a system that non-technical people can use (particularly when you use a 'smart modem' like the Netcomm 123, and GP Term as the terminal program). They have even given me special message- and upload areas on the board. Let's hope they will soon get used quite extensively.

CONTRIBUTIONS

When Alan Hill told me he had written some 'stuff' for the newsletter (see *Mail Box*) he sounded very apologetic about his contributions - doubting if they were good enough. Well, I have news for Alan and other members who doubt their own abilities. Very few member's articles end up in the *Trashcan*. Alan is imparting INFORMATION, and that's exactly where many members are looking for (particularly outside Brisbane, but I'm sure that lots of our city members will find this sort of information equally useful). I love good 'solid' articles about programming, hardware projects etc., but equally useful are the type of information that Alan gives us - you'd be surprised how many members recently have asked us about the cost of memory expansion, and Alan has given us some of the answers. What it amounts to is that we like to read *any* kind of information relating to our hobby, be it hardware or software purchases- or problems, book purchases, little tips, a new book or magazine - you name it and I'll publish it. It is only through this kind of interaction that we will remain a vibrant and alive group.

As well as Alan's contribution, we have articles from Paul Gunther (our Sydney correspondent) and Greg Perry who look at the *World Of Commodore* exhibition, Robert Googe does another software review, John Howard looks at disks, Jim Vick looks at Opus and does a WP startup-sequence and the Phillips brothers, Dan and Reuben take a good hard look at the 64 Emulator. Last but not least, I received a series of articles from Thursday Island by one of our newer members, Peter McNamee. Peter happens to be related to a certain Steve McNamee (they are brothers in fact) and, although he doesn't claim to be as smart as his more famous brother, he does at least supply us with articles for the newsletter, and a certain party may well hide his head in shame!

KICKSTART / WORKBENCH 1.3

If our friends at CBM have told the truth, you should by now be able to buy your 1.3 Enhancer Kit. Even if you never buy any commercial software, do buy this kit. The price won't be too high, but the main thing is the documentation supplied with the kit. Without this documentation you'll be lost. At this point in time I've only had experience with the new Preferences/Printer Drivers of the 1.3 version, because they have been released with several commercial packages. As *every* package is slightly different from the others, I can only assume that these are different pre-release versions; this is confusing to say the least, so the official release version will be very welcome. As I have written previously, there's no need to upgrade Kickstart on either A500s or 2000s, unless you use a hard drive and want to be able to autoboot from this drive. However I do believe that CBM will offer a hardware upgrade (through official Commcare service centres) for those users who require it. A1000 users will get a new disk version of Kickstart 1.3. Provided that the package is released by the end of October, we will give a demo/talk at the main meeting in November.

Ralph De Vries

RANDOM BITS

OCTOBER MAIN MEETING

This meeting was dominated by the 8-bit users, but never mind, our turn will come again!

Before the meeting Greg Perry showed an interesting video which he had obtained during his recent trip to Sydney. Produced by a Canberra based company, E. S, & A. Graphics, it showed what can be done with the Amiga in the video field – a very impressive demonstration.

In the main auditorium Greg Shea and Jim Vick had a very elaborate system set up with computers, modems etc. to be able to show off the *Opus* Bulletin Board System. By actually bringing the *total* BBS to the meeting they showed how to access the board with a C–64. This was both an introduction to bulletin boards in general, as well as showing our C64/128 users that the board is not solely for use by Amiga owners, but can also be accessed by our 8 bit users. Our thanks to Greg and Jim for the very substantial amount of work involved in preparing this demonstration.

MAIN MEETING: SALES HOURS

Please note that sales of disks and accessories will only be conducted between the hours of 7pm and 8pm during the main meeting at Bardon. This is done to give our 'salesman' the opportunity to attend the official part of the main meeting.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Because of study- and work commitments, we have lost the services of our Associate Editor, Andre Marino, although it's hoped that we will still see some contributions from Andre in the future. Is there an Amiga owner hiding out there who is interested in this position? We are looking for somebody who has a reasonable command of the English language and owns an Amiga with at least 1 Meg of memory. Interested? Ring the editor on 300 3477 for details.

NEW AMIGA GROUP

An Amiga Users Group has been founded in Toowoomba. For further details contact Nick Wilson on (076) 358 539 (business) or (076) 359 221 (after hours). We believe that they even publish their newsletter on disk – they're a keen lot on the Downs!

ANOTHER ONE

Recently there appeared in newsagents another Amiga computer magazine – the second from the U.K. It's called *Amiga User* and comes out every second month. The Australian price is $5.75, which makes it the cheapest Amiga-only mag on the market. This type of magazine reinforces the claim made by some people that "the Amiga is only a games machine", as more than a third of the magazine is taken up with games reviews. Not for programmers or people who look for a more serious use of their Amigas.

WORDPERFECT UPGRADE

We recently received the latest update for WordPerfect. It is called version 4.1.9 and is dated 10th August 1988. Registered owners of WP can send their set of four *original* disks to WordPerfect Pacific, 15 Merriwa Street, Gordon NSW 2072, to obtain this latest upgrade.

HELP WANTED

I have recently taken the plunge and invested in an A–500 and have been having a great time getting Gurus and other weird messages. I was talking to a friend and found he was thinking of buying an Amiga also (good choice) with the idea of using it with MIDI instruments. If any club members either use MIDI or know anything about MIDI and the Amiga, would you drop me a line at the address below.

On a different subject, does anyone know where the female edge connectors for the A500 expansion port can be obtained. I am interested in trying a couple of simple hardware projects and need these connectors. Any information on either of these subjects will be greatly appreciated.

Gary MacMinn, 25 Prior St., Tarragindi 4121, Brisbane.

MEGADISC 8

We have just received the latest offering in the Megadisc series from Tim Strachan, and we all agree that this Amiga 'magazine on disk' is going from strength to strength - in fact, without naming names, it's probably the best of its kind currently available. Just take a look at the contributors to this latest issue, a veritable listing of Amiga talent from the whole of Australia, and this means that the bulk of the articles and programs are home-grown products. Do yourself a favour, and subscribe - it's well worth the $90.00 for 6 issues, *and* you support Australian enterprise.

Subscription address: Megadisc Digital Publishing, P.O.Box 759, Crows Nest, NSW, 2066.

STARTUP-SEQUENCE

On page 28 of this issue you will find a startup-sequence for WordPerfect. This was written by Jim Vick, and it appeared a very good way of starting WP with alternative options (i.e. load WP 'straight', or load WP *and* the spelling checker into RAM. Well, it seemed to work fine, but when your editor did try a spell checking session he ran into problems (no, I don't want to tell you the nature of the problem at this stage!)

If you own WP (or a word processor which has a spelling checker on a separate dik), can you tell us what's wrong with this startup-sequence? Send your ideas to the editor, P.O. Box 384, Ashgrove, 4060.

NEW REPAIR SERVICE

Tony May, formerly of Pro Digital Services, has moved on and joined a newly formed company called *South East Queensland Computer Repairs*. They are situated at 32 Brisbane Street in Bundamba, and the phone number is 816 1588.

SUPERBASE

Up till now the group's membership database has been run on a C-128 computer. The actual database program was written by our President Greg Perry and has served us very well indeed. However with time and expansion the program became a bit too cumbersome and too slow, and an alternative had to be found. We have now purchased *Superbase Personal* for the Amiga and Greg Perry and Secretary Mike Williams have been busy transferring all our membership data files from Commodore 1571 disks to the Amiga. We also believe that our Treasurer John Van Staveren is transferring his financial- and stock records to Superbase. Hopefully this means that we will very soon have some resident Superbase experts in our group, and we can look forward to some interesting Superbase demos!

QUICK OF THE MARK

At the time of writing (5th October), one of our members bought a new A500, and found to his surprise that his new computer had Kickstart version 1.3 built in!

-ooOoo-

A.C.E. & WORLD OF COMMODORE

reporter: Paul Gunther

In the third major computer exhibition for this year in Sydney, Commodore Business Machines have finally decided to make a stand. And what a stand it was ! Not only did they feature a booth in the ACE area (Australian Computer Exhibition), but another area, about one tenth the size of the whole exhibition floor, was totally dedicated to Commodore; this was the "World of Commodore" exhibition.

The actual ACE CBM booth was where the 'interesting' new stuff was (more later), however this section was entered only after paying the $15 entrance fee and receiving your own registration card. The 'World of Commodore' section was free admission.

PC88 and Comdex both at Darling Harbour Exhibition centre earlier this year did not feature any CBM presence, only a few third party dealers who happened to sell Amigas. As a whole I would rate ACE as between PC88 and Comdex so far as the actual attendance was concerned.

In larger places like New York and Germany CBM tends to regularly have these sort of larger shows. Maybe this is a sign of things to come from Commodore in Australia?
Onwards with the news ...

ADVERTISING

An Amiga promotional video was shown continuously on a wall of 9 television screens showing Amiga at work. Good show.
(Ever heard a yank pronounce multi-tasking: "The mul-tie-tas-king Amiga!")

LOGO

Commodore seem to have adopted a new style logo, in conjunction with their new products. The letters CBM appear with the words "The New Force in Business Machines".

CBM commodore
business machines

The New Force in Business Microcomputing.

NEW PRODUCT OFFERINGS

Apart from Amiga-ish devices the ancient C64 machine was still being marketed. A whole swag of IBM compatible machines were also on show.

GENLOCKS/VISION MIXERS

I saw a few genlock/vision mixer hardware devices that were really starting to look darn good. I imagine that a television station could find little reason not to consider the Amiga together with a broadcast quality genlock as a useful tool.

VIDEO MONITORS

On display were the new 1084S (stereo) monitors, a CBM multisync style monitor for use on the Amiga as well as all those higher resolution video cards as used on IBM type microcomputers. While in Amiga mode, this monitor displays an incredibly sharp picture with no visible gaps between scan lines on a normal display. The scan lines were butted together very nicely indeed.
I had a quick look at an enormous colour monitor running a desktop publishing program that delivered an exceptionally high quality picture - screen diagonal about twice a 1081 (1084).

SOFTWARE

Plenty of software vendors around - Questor EPYX (games) - 'Hot disk' ('Playboy' like magazine on disk - photos - forums - tips!...), lots of others ... GP software ... GP software ? Hey those guys are from Brisbane! Greg Perry was showing off his latest professional software offering (co-authored by Steve McNamee) GPTERM-Amiga. Had a quick play with the software and it looked like any other communications programs on the Amiga ... menus, various screen resolutions ... adjust all conceivable settings ...
No, I was not paid by Greg for this but I thought the software was great (Not a frequent MODEM user myself I can't comment on usability over a long period or reliability). It even has a little profile with every number you can dial so selecting a number will load your favourite colours, settings etc ... Good work guys.

INPUT/OUTPUT

A modification to a 1081 monitor to give it touch-screen capability (good for disabled people; My own mother (not disabled) finds it very difficult to co-ordinate a mouse so an inexperienced user may find a touch-screen very useful).

3-D glasses. Using custom software these glasses give the Amiga display a 3-D effect. It does work. Much like the 'Wonder Vehicle' at the Japan pavilion at World Expo 88 in Brisbane. A hand held 'gun' was shown being used as a 'non-passive' input device for a game - 'Capone' as I recall. Shoot the baddies as they appear on screen - great for relieving stress !!

Saw a Tektronics colour printer for $12000 that produced an image of an Amiga screen with faithful colour reproduction. The same image looked worse in a colour magazine than the colour printed image from this printer.

HARDWARE ADD-ONS

I was impressed by the range of hardware products offered by a company called Memory And Storage Technology, Inc. (02 436 2600). [Ed: associated with Diskworks]

These guys distribute to the USA and offer hard disks (up to 1 gigabyte $12000), memory (for A500, A1000: - $300 for 0 K. base, plus $230 for each half meg, depending on memory chip prices), external and internal 3.5 inch disk drives... If their product range is anything to go by then they do offer a good service (they sold me an Amiga World for $5!).

WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING!!!

You will be forgiven at this stage for not reading the rest of this article if you so choose. Released on the first day of the show (20th September 1988) were two new Amiga models. Here are the specifications. Please fasten seat belts and helmets now ...

A2500.AT

Looks like A2000.
Supposedly 100% existing Amiga compatible with its on-board 68000 microprocessor.
1 Meg ram for this CPU. (7 MHz) -68020 full 32 bit CPU at 14 MHz.
68881 maths coprocessor at 14 MHz.- 68851 memory management unit.
2 MEG 32 bit ram. - 80286 independent CPU at 8 MHz.
optional 80287 maths coprocessor. - 1 Meg ram for this CPU.
At this stage I could insert all the wonderful features that make the Amiga so wonderful (custom chips - blitter - 4096 colours ...) however I won't.
Slots much like A2000: 3 free 100 pin AMIGA slots. 3 XT slots. 1 free AT slot.
5.25 inch 1.2MEG floppy drive for DOS side. 40 MEG hard disk on board. (can partition AMIGADOS, MSDOS) clock/calendar. runs AMIGA DOS and MS DOS 3.2
All for the paltry sum of $AUS 12500.00

A2500.UX

Box still looks like A2000.
CPUs: 68000 - 68020 - 68881 - 68851 MMU
comes with 2 3½" Amiga floppies - 100 MEG hard disk
runs UNIX System V release 3 version 1 and AMIGA DOS
Unfortunately a mix-up at customs prevented the A2500.UX from being at the show so I couldn't see a demo. - All for the incredibly low price of: (do not read the following line if earn less than $15000 per annum)....... $15000.00

I did not see any on display but a A2500.XT model was advertised as having XT bridgeboard and 20 MEG hard disk (68000, 8088 CPUs) - a low as you can go..... $7000
My intuition says that these new models are based on a A2000 with the relevant hardware option cards installed. This may be a cost effective solution and I challenge anyone to publish a list that details the relative costs of these new models or a A2000 base unit and the hardware add-on cards separate.

Wild speculation: A3000 68030 UNIX 1000*1000 19XX (where XX > 88).......

MORE ON "WOC"

by Greg Perry

Arguably, the most important computer show in Australia is the PC show in Sydney held about March. Unfortunately, to the disappointment of many, Commodore did not show up. (Atari did!) To Commodore's credit, however, they have now made amends by running Australia's first 'World of Commodore Show' at Darling Harbour in September. Run in association with the ACS/ACE show, Commodore had their own separate area with free entry to all. Although the show wasn't a 'real' WOC show like happens overseas, where they have lectures and seminars for users, is was a start, and a great start at that.

For those who were unfortunate not to be able to attend, the show consisted of a large Commodore stand plus several stands from Commodore dealers, distributors, software producers and others like The Australian Commodore and Amiga Review magazine. If you wanted to see the Amiga in all its disguises this was the place. Several large video displays featuring a myriad of amazing Amiga generated computer graphics combined with several knowledgeable Amiga people from both here and overseas to answer your questions made the show was a great success.

The Dealers and Distributors

To their credit, the computer dealers and distributors themselves put on a variety of demonstrations of the latest software and hardware. I do not have space to mention all the participants, just a few features that caught my eye. MicroComputer Spot had several demonstrations on how to actually create Amiga art including having an artist creating graphics and digitised pictures while you watched. I was most interested in the new 3-D glasses demonstrated by the United Computer Group. Unlike the old red/green glasses we have all seen at horror movies, the new 3-D glasses consist of liquid crystal lenses connected via an interface to the Amiga and controlled by the software. Such devices have been available for some time on very expensive computer graphics terminals but now they are available to anyone with an Amiga for around $199.00. Using them with the demonstration 3-D game actually did produce a very realistic 3-D effect. I was told that there will be more software appearing in the very near future which fully support these glasses for 3-D CAD, drawing and graphics applications.

Neriki were demonstrating their latest in genlocks and other video technology as well as showing short video from ES&A Computer Graphics of Canberra. The video was most impressive in showing what is actually being produced now on the Amiga. Among 2-D and 3-D graphics was an impressive 3-D 'flyover' of the new parliament house complex. (The video is available from ES&A for $25.00. Phone 062 950478)

Memory And Storage Technology (Diskworks) had their new memory expansion boards and hard disk interfaces for the A500 on show. They also were displaying their 3½" drives, Supra 2400 baud modems and other products.

Computamart of WA also made their presence felt for the first time. Apparently they have recently been appointed 'sole' Australian agents for the 16 bit Precision products such as SuperBase and other programs. I had several discussions with them about support for SuperBase users and they are apparently taking the job seriously including setting up a special BBS with Australia Wide FIDO mail links to help users with problems. (Retail prices are $299.00 for SB Personal, $499.00 for SB Professional and $299.00 for upgrade from personal to professional. Special site licenses are available for educational institutions. For example SB Pro at $299.00 on 5+ orders.)

Cerato Software deserve a particular mention. Cerato is a non-profit, government sponsored organization, funded to produce computer programs that will enhance the independent living skills of people with intellectual disabilities. They have developed 16 programs to date and are working on more. They had some very interesting applications running at the show including using touch screens and other input devices. Anyone interested in further information should contact them directly on Melbourne (03) 48 5758.

The Commodore Stand.

The best stand however was that put on by Commodore itself. The combination of people, new products and new machines was very successful. After three days however, the US made promotional videos began to grate on one's nerves, especially the thick American accent talking about "the mul-tee-tass-king Am-eee-ga" and the fact that "you too can run your own soft-ware pro-grams". (I thought we had been using software for years but I guess we were only facilitating ourselves into an interactive context-sensitive software situation?)

The New Products.

Amongst other new products on show for the 2000 machines were a 'flickerfree' board ($899) to eliminate the interlace blues for graphics and desktop publishing, (this was running on a new Mitsubishi 19" HR monitor at $4900), and the A2300 genlock board ($700) for amateur video use with a professional version in the pipeline. Also on display was a Xerox 4020 colour printer and a Tektronics Colour Image printer ($14000). Indeed one of the most sought after items were printouts (if you could call them that, they looked more like photographs) from the Tektronics using Deluxe Photo Lab. This was topped off with Magnatech demonstrating their 4005 broadcast quality Genlock ($3700 + tax) with many built in functions including an internal sync capability.

Well, back to earth for us mere mortals. The new 1084S monitor was being used on most machines. The 'S' means stereo. Same specifications as the standard 1084 monitor but now with two built in amplifiers and speakers and a proper DIN type plug on the back instead of the horrible EURO connector of old. Even to the surprise of one Commodore executive, most of the 500s and 2000s were running under the new 1.3 OS, with the 2000s autobooting from hard drives via the 2090a hard disk interface boards. I was told that release versions of WB 1.3 disks and docs will (!) be available in early October (about $25?) and the 1.3 500/2000 ROMS shortly after. The ROM will apparently be available only from Commcare service centres.

The People.

The best part of the stand were the people demonstrating their specialist areas, not forgetting those from Commodore itself who even had an engineer from the German company on the stand! Two visitors from the US were here specifically to support their latest software releases. Kailish Ambwani, President of Gold Disk, was demonstrating Professional Page on the 'flicker free' 19" monitor system. He also had on show three of Gold Disk's new products – 'Movie Setter', a film creation package designed so that you can make your own movies using 'Walt Disney' techniques; 'Comic Setter', an interesting comic animation package designed for education as well as the hobbyist market; and 'Professional Draw', a stand alone package designed to complement desktop publishing programs (such as Professional Page) with the ability to do high resolution colour separations. Bobby Kotick from the Disk Company demonstrated their new package 'Critics Choice'. This includes the 'Kind Words' wordprocessing package (with proper English spelling dictionary), a new improved version of Microfiche Filer, and the spreadsheet Maxiplan 500. All for the retail price of about $399.00.

Music was not just left to those US produced videos. Computer music specialists, Phil Riggor and Phil Beasley from Fine Line Music in Sydney had their own area showing off the Amiga connected to a variety of MIDI keyboards and other devices supported by several music packages.

One of the most popular demos consisted of an A2000 with the new 68020 board and auto-booting 3.5" hard drive running the flight simulator game 'Interceptor'. The speed of the graphics and the game in general proved a handful for even the most experienced players. Andrew Farrell of the Commodore Review was appointed honorary test pilot for many of the public demonstrations and even he had a great deal of trouble landing the F16 on the carrier at 4 times normal speed!

In Summary

Despite the confusion and apparent lack of organization a few weeks before and the lack of publicity outside of Sydney, Commodore must be congratulated for a splendid effort. I also wish to extend my personal thanks to Bill McCarthy, the Public Relations Officer, and Tony Cuffe, National Product Development Manager, for their assistance during the show. Hopefully, the next 'World of Commodore' show will be even bigger and better. Maybe even with specific lectures and seminars for users? Whatever happens, be sure that you don't miss the next one!

THAT FUNNY *.INFO* FILE

by Ralph De Vries

Amiga owners who are comfortable using the CLI (or a DirUtil program) may have discovered one or more files just called *.info*. Most of you will know that a filename followed by .info means that it is a description of an icon, but what about this .info file? To find out (if you are in the CLI), TYPE .INFO, and you will normally see the names of all the files which have icons attached to them and which are displayed in the *current* window (current Directory). These .info files are created for *each* directory which has icons attached to it.

The interesting thing about this .info file is that it is updated whenever the system (Workbench) accesses your disk or disks. If you want proof of this put a newly formatted disk into drive 1 (it will only have a Trashcan and its associated icon on it), and now click on the disk icon. You should now be greeted by a window with just the Trashcan icon. Close the window, go to the CLI and enter dir df1:. You will now find that you have a .info file on your disk! This proves that, even though you may only have opened a disk to *read* a file, Workbench still *writes* to that disk (unless of course you have put the write protect on). As we are always told NEVER to remove a disk when the red light is still on, it should now be apparent that, if you break this rule, you may well end up with a corrupted disk, because you may have interrupted the system while it tried to create or update this .info file [updating takes place whenever a new icon (i.e. a file) has been added to that current drawer (directory)].

The actual *usefulness* of this .info file is debatable. It doesn't seem to matter a great deal if it's present or not. If it isn't there, Workbench will create one. Again, if you clone a disk or a directory by means of the COPY command (or with a program like CLIMate, DirUtil etc.), you may as well leave the .info file off, as the systems disk will soon create another one!

MORE ON DISKS

by John Howard

At the 6th September general meeting, our President, Greg Perry raised the question of "cheap disks".

Further info on this subject by Peter Miles, ICPUG Librarian, 'in a recent ICPUG newsletter' is reported by *Commodore Computing International* magazine, July 1988, at p.53.

He says that the primary difference between cheap and expensive disks is one of manufacturing quality and that the main cause of all those read/write errors and occasional 'not a DOS disk', is the relative levels of signal to noise ratio, made up of the surface noise of the heads passing over the iron oxide particles of the disk compared to the data signal level.

He goes on to say that this is not so important so long as you are reading and writing to your own disks where errors tend to be consistent and relatively transparent to the one disk drive. Problems multiply when you swap disk with others and to other machines, borne out by their experience in their Library when third parties try to read disks on different machines. Head alignment has only to be off very slightly to give a read/write error.

Furthermore he mentions that it is all to do with 'clipping levels' and 'certification'. Clipping levels, as a percentage, is the ratio between the data signal and the noise level. On a cheap disk this can be as low as 40%, and on a more expensive disk the level can be as high as 70 – 75%. The greater the clipping level, the more inaccurate the head alignment to the track can be with data still being read.

As to certification, this is generally measured, he says, by the American Standards Institute (ANSI) who state that only the data tracks must be certified. The test also requires that the tracks be free from flaws that may give rise to errors. It does *not* check for errors between tracks. However, some of the more reliable companies are now checking for gap flaws, to ensure that these flaws do not creep on to the data tracks.

In his summary, disks with a high clipping level and certified on and between the tracks will have a greater degree of interchange reliability between drives, with the minimum chance of read/write errors. He ends by saying that he speaks from bitter and expensive experience.

Conclusion:- Get your head read and get certified.

Disk report from the USA (from the *Amigan Apprentice & Journeyman*, May/June and July-/August issues): –

Maxell disks failed because of hard high heat welds on the inside of the plastic cases which in turn impressed their image onto the disk material itself! Result – a very high failure rate.

Verbatim disks purchased by the A & J had a failure rate of 12% – this on 6 different drives. They found that the most reliable brand of disks were Kodak disks, followed by the Sony brand. And guess what.... Kodak owns Verbatim!!!

So far the US report. It should be stressed that the brands mentioned above might well have different local characteristics because we are not in a position to ascertain where these disks are manufactured or assembled. At present the group will stick with SKC because of the very low failure rate.

Editor

THE NEW BULLETIN BOARD

by Jim Vick

To the members of the Users Group that missed the main last meeting, our new Bulletin Board is now up and running, and at this stage with nearly a month behind us has been without major incidents apart from teething problems normal with a system such as this.
Most of the credit for the trouble free start can be attributed to the three people who did most of the work during the setting up stages. Our Amiga Coordinator Steve McNamee who has spent many hours putting the whole thing together and making sure we had it all right, our President Greg Perry for the time he put into getting all the gear together and helping set it up, and of course our Sysop Greg Shea who has the responsibility for keeping the system going and doing the day to day chores that the BBS requires.

Now to the System itself. The software we are using is called Opus and is a program that is used worldwide to run the majority of Bulletin boards that are in existence. The computer is an IBM clone with twin floppies and a 42 Meg hard disk drive.
Now before you cry *shame!* or whatever, the simple facts are that there is no suitable software for either the 64/128 computers or the Amiga that suited our needs.
I know that this will raise a certain amount of controversy because we have had several systems written specifically for the 64 but they all have the common problem with reliability and we felt that, as we were running a service for the CCUGQ, it should be reliable and also give the members the best access to the world, without the sysop spending vast amounts of time keeping the thing running.

A little bit about the program;- it supports all speeds up to 2400 baud and is capable of going a lot faster with a high speed modem. The program is fully menu driven and very simple to use with all commands accessed via a single character entry.

The advantages of Opus over other BBS programs is that it is virtually the default standard system and as such there are thousands of Bulletin Boards worldwide all similar and all capable of being hooked together to allow the transfer of information quickly to any part of the globe via a system called netmail. What this means is that if I wished to send a message to a friend in Melbourne (or anywhere else in the world) I would access the local Bulletin Board and leave the message. That night all the messages to be transferred from our BBS are automatically sent to a central BBS for the area. The one that we access is "Brisbug" the local IBM users group BBS. This central computer then packets up all the available mail and sends it via a high speed modem to the central area for the destination mail. The same process is then repeated in reverse to break the packets of mail up and distribute them to the area. The advantage of this system is that it only costs the user at each end a local phone call and a small service charge to send his mail any distance and normally it should be received next day. The normal procedure is to send a couple of dollars to the User group and this goes into your account at the BBS so that you have credit to send messages whenever you wish.
The other advantage is the echomail system which links a large number of Bulletin Boards together so that a message I send tonight can be read by people Australia wide the next day, and a query sent out can have a dozen replies by the next night. This echomail system also has special interest areas so that if your only interest is in C programming then there is a special area for people to talk about it.

We also have extensive upload and download areas for users to access for file transfer including a special area where you can leave a program for a friend to pick up directly as a user to user direct transfer.

The board is open to all club members and the more people we have using the system the better, as an active Board provides a good forum to air your ideas. To gain membership to the board all that is required is to log on and fill out the questionnaire from the main menu. This will then be processed to allow you full access. So, if you have a modem give us a ring and be part of the fun!

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BASIC PROGRAMS

by Peter McNamee

I would like to advise our members that I have typed in the following basic utilities programs from the book *Advanced Amiga Basic* by Tom R. Halfhill and Charles Brannon. I have given them to the Amiga SIG PD librarian.

BASIC UTILITIES

IFF Translator: Converts IFF images, such as from DPAINT, to objects for use in AmigaBasic object commands.

Shapeit: A simple drawing program that saves your drawings as either objects or data statements. (Note: this has a few bugs in it and I would appreciate it if anyone could debug it).

Object Data Maker: This program converts objects made from programs such as Objedit (On Amiga Extras Disk) to data statements that can be merged into AmigaBasic programs.

Pick a Palette: Allows you to adjust the red blue green sliders to any color and then gives you the values for use in AmigaBasic Palette commands

I have written the following AmigaBasic programs and offer them as well to the PD library.

PROGRAMS

Clock: Written in AmigaBasic as discussed in following article. (written in 60 column mode)

Graph: A program that you can enter sets of coordinates and then have the coordinates plotted on the graph. The program then calculates the standard deviation, mean and draws the line of nearest fit on the graph. This could be useful for school students studying maths and chemistry etc. (Written in 60 column mode)

Calculator: A non complete Calculator program written in AmigaBasic as discussed in another article.(Written in 60 column mode)

Equations: A simple AmigaBasic program to solve a set of simultaneous equations. (May be useful for school students)

-ooOoo-

"CLOCK" PROGRAM

by Peter McNamee

```
1 getime:CLEAR
2 t$=TIME$
3 DIM a(60):DIM b(60):DIM c(60):DIM d(60):DIM e(60):DIM f(60)
4 DIM x(60):DIM y(60)
5 sec=VAL(RIGHT$(t$,2))
6 hour=VAL(LEFT$(t$,2))
7 min=VAL(MID$(t$,4,2))
8 sec1=sec:min1=min:hour1=hour
9 SCREEN 1,320,200,3,1
```

```
10 WINDOW 1,"Clock",(0,0)-(309,180),8,1
11 COLOR 1,2:CLS
12 wdth=WINDOW(2):height=WINDOW(3)
13 xfact=wdth/618:yfact=height/186
14 rfact=((height/186)^2+(wdth/618)^2)^.5
15 rfact=rfact/1.414214
16 drawclock:
17 WINDOW OUTPUT 1
18 CIRCLE (100,90),75,5,,,1
19 CIRCLE (100,90),90,5,,,1
20 PAINT (100,5),4,5
21 PAINT (100,90),6,5
22 drawdigital:
23 LINE (195,1)-(308,25),5,b
24 LINE (199,6)-(303,20),5,b
25 PAINT (196,2),5,5
26 LINE (195,22)-(308,178),5,b
27 LINE (197,52)-(207,62),6,bf
28 LOCATE 7:PRINT;TAB(22)"Set Time:"
29 LOCATE 9:PRINT;TAB(22)"Set Alarm"
30 LINE (197,70)-(207,80),5,bf
31 LOCATE 5:PRINT;TAB(22)"Click to:"
32 LINE (197,34)-(207,44),3,b
33 n=0:num=.1047197#:num2=6.2831853#
34 FOR pi= num TO num2 STEP num
35 n=n+1
36 x(n)=SIN(pi)*75:a(n)=SIN(pi)*70
37 y(n)=COS(pi)*75:b(n)=COS(pi)*70
38 c(n)=SIN(pi)*77
39 d(n)=COS(pi)*77
40 e(n)=SIN(pi)*72
41 f(n)=COS(pi)*72
42 x(n)=INT(x(n)):y(n)=INT(y(n)):a(n)=INT(a(n)):b(n)=INT(b(n))
43 LINE(x(n)+100,90-y(n))-(a(n)+100,90-b(n)),2
44 NEXT pi
45 FOR n=0 TO 60 STEP 5
46 c(n)=INT(c(n)):d(n)=INT(d(n))
47 c(n)=c(n)+100:d(n)=90-d(n)
48 e(n)=INT(e(n)+100):f(n)=INT(90-f(n))
49 NEXT n
50 FOR n=1 TO 12
51 CIRCLE (e(n*5),f(n*5)),2,3,,,1
52 PAINT (e(n*5),f(n*5)),3,3
53 NEXT n
54 REM 1
55 LINE(c(5),d(5))-(c(5),d(5)-8),1
56 REM 2
57 LINE(c(10),d(10))-(c(10),d(10)-8),1
58 LINE(c(10)+2,d(10))-(c(10)+2,d(10)-8),1
59 REM 3
60 LINE(c(15),d(15))-(c(15),d(15)-8),1
61 LINE(c(15)+2,d(15))-(c(15)+2,d(15)-8),1
62 LINE(c(15)+4,d(15))-(c(15)+4,d(15)-8),1
63 REM 4
64 LINE(c(20),d(20))-(c(20),d(20)+8),1
65 LINE(c(20)+2,d(20))-(c(20)+4,d(20)+8),1
66 LINE(c(20)+4,d(20)+8)-(c(20)+6,d(20)),1
67 REM 5
```

```
68 LINE(c(25),d(25))-(c(25)+2,d(25)+8),1
69 LINE(c(25)+2,d(25)+8)-(c(25)+4,d(25)),1
70 REM 6
71 LINE(c(30)+6,d(30))-(c(30)+6,d(30)+8),1
72 LINE(c(30),d(30))-(c(30)+2,d(30)+8),1
73 LINE(c(30)+2,d(30)+8)-(c(30)+4,d(30)),1
74 REM 7
75 LINE(c(35),d(35))-(c(35),d(35)+8),1
76 LINE(c(35)-2,d(35))-(c(35)-2,d(35)+8),1
77 LINE(c(35)-4,d(35))-(c(35)-6,d(35)+8),1
78 LINE(c(35)-6,d(35)+8)-(c(35)-8,d(35)),1
79 REM 8
80 LINE(c(40)-2,d(40))-(c(40)-2,d(40)+8),1
81 LINE(c(40)-4,d(40))-(c(40)-4,d(40)+8),1
82 LINE(c(40)-6,d(40))-(c(40)-8,d(40)+8),1
83 LINE(c(40)-8,d(40)+8)-(c(40)-10,d(40)),1
84 LINE(c(40),d(40))-(c(40),d(40)+8),1
85 REM 9
86 LINE(c(45),d(45))-(c(45)-5,d(45)+8),1
87 LINE(c(45)-5,d(45))-(c(45),d(45)+8),1
88 LINE(c(45)-7,d(45))-(c(45)-7,d(45)+8),1
89 REM 10
90 LINE(c(50),d(50))-(c(50)-5,d(50)-8),1
91 LINE(c(50)-5,d(50))-(c(50),d(50)-8),1
92 REM 11
93 LINE(c(55)-2,d(55))-(c(55)-7,d(55)-8),1
94 LINE(c(55)-7,d(55))-(c(55)-2,d(55)-8),1
95 LINE(c(55),d(55))-(c(55),d(55)-8),1
96 REM 12
97 LINE(c(60),d(60))-(c(60)-5,d(60)-8),1
98 LINE(c(60)-5,d(60))-(c(60),d(60)-8),1
99 LINE(c(60)+2,d(60))-(c(60)+2,d(60)-8),1
100 LINE(c(60)+4,d(60))-(c(60)+4,d(60)-8),1
101 IF hour>11 AND min>59 AND sec>59 THEN hour=hour-12
102 IF min<12 THEN fact=0
103 IF min>=12 AND min<24 THEN fact=1
104 IF min>=24 AND min<36 THEN fact=2
105 IF min>=36 AND min<48 THEN fact=3
106 IF min>=48 AND min<=59 THEN fact=4
107 hour=(hour*5)+fact
108 setalarm:
109 msx=MOUSE(1):msy=MOUSE(2)
110 IF msx>=197 AND msx<=207 THEN
111 IF msy>=52 AND msy<=62 THEN set=1
112 IF msy>=70 AND msy<=80 THEN set=2
113 END IF
114 IF set =1 OR set=2 THEN GOSUB mousehandler
115 h1=hour
116 LINE (197,82)-(306,175),3,bf
117 calctime:
118 xsec=(SIN(sec*num)*69)+100
119 ysec=90-(COS(sec*num)*69)
120 xmin=(SIN(min*num)*65)+100
121 ymin=90-(COS(min*num)*65)
122 xhour=(SIN(hour*num)*55)+100
123 yhour=90-(COS(hour*num)*55)
124 GOSUB currtime
125 digital:
```

```
126 sec1=sec1+1
127 IF sec1=60 THEN
128 sec1=0:min1=min1+1
129 END IF
130 IF min1=60 AND sec1=0 THEN
131 hour1=hour1+1:min1=0
132 END IF
133 IF hour1>11 THEN a$="PM" ELSE a$="AM"
134 IF hour1=24 AND min1=0 AND sec1=0 THEN
135 hour1=0
136 END IF
137 movehands:
138 IF sec=59 THEN
139 min=min+1
140 GOSUB movemin
141 END IF
142 IF h=2 THEN
143 hour=hour+1
144 h=0
145 GOSUB movehour
146 END IF
147 IF min=60 THEN min=0
148 IF sec=0 THEN
149 IF min=12 OR min=24 OR min=36 OR min=48 OR min=0 THEN h=2
150 END IF
151 sec=sec+1:GOSUB movesec
152 IF hour=60 THEN hour=0
153 IF sec=60 THEN sec=0
154 GOTO calctime
155 movesec:
156 LINE (100,90)-(xsec,ysec),3
157 LINE (100,90)-(xsec,ysec),6
158 RETURN
159 movemin:
160 LINE (100,90)-(xmin,ymin),2
161 xmin=(SIN((min-1)*num)*65)+100
162 ymin=90-(COS((min-1)*num)*65)
163 LINE (100,90)-(xmin,ymin),6
164 RETURN
165 movehour:
166 LINE (100,90)-(xhour,yhour),2
167 xhour=(SIN((hour-1)*num)*55)+100
168 yhour=90-(COS((hour-1)*num)*55)
169 LINE (100,90)-(xhour,yhour),6
170 RETURN
171 currtime:
172 LINE (100,90)-(xsec,ysec),3
173 LINE (100,90)-(xmin,ymin),2
174 LINE (100,90)-(xhour,yhour),2
175 LOCATE 10:PRINT TAB(13);a$
176 LOCATE 2:PRINT TAB(21);hour1
177 LOCATE 2:PRINT TAB(24);min1
178 LOCATE 2:PRINT TAB(27);sec1
179 LOCATE 2:PRINT TAB(24);":"
180 LOCATE 2:PRINT TAB(27);":"
181 t#=TIMER+1:WHILE TIMER<t#:WEND
182 IF MOUSE(0)<>0 THEN GOSUB setalarm
183 IF hh=hour1 AND mm=min1 AND ss=sec1 THEN GOSUB beeper
```

```
184 count=count+1
185 IF beeper=1 AND count<60 THEN BEEP
186 RETURN
187 mousehandler:
188 IF set=2 THEN
189 LINE(197,82)-(306,175),5,bf
190 LOCATE 19:PRINT TAB(23)"RETURN"
191 LINE (220,160)-(281,171),1,b
192 LOCATE 15:PRINT;TAB(22)"Enter"
193 a2$="Alarm"
194 LOCATE 11:PRINT;TAB(23)a2$
195 LOCATE 13:PRINT;TAB(22)setalarm$
196 LOCATE 17:PRINT TAB(21):INPUT;setalarm$
197 LOCATE 13:PRINT;TAB(22)setalarm$
198 ss=VAL(RIGHT$(setalarm$,2))
199 mm=VAL(MID$(setalarm$,4,2))
200 hh=VAL(LEFT$(setalarm$,2))
201 END IF
202 IF set=1 THEN
203 LINE(197,82)-(306,175),6,bf
204 LOCATE 19:PRINT TAB(23)"RETURN"
205 LINE (220,160)-(281,171),1,b
206 LOCATE 13:PRINT;TAB(22)"HH:MM:SS"
207 LOCATE 15:PRINT;TAB(22)"Enter"
208 a2$="Time"
209 LOCATE 11:PRINT;TAB(23)a2$
210 LOCATE 17:PRINT TAB(21):INPUT;settime$
211 sec=VAL(RIGHT$(settime$,2))
212 min=VAL(MID$(settime$,4,2))
213 hour=VAL(LEFT$(settime$,2))
214 sec1=sec:min1=min:hour1=hour
215 h1=hour
216 IF hour>11 AND min>59 AND sec>59 THEN hour=hour-12
217 IF min<12 THEN fact=0
218 IF min>=12 AND min<24 THEN fact=1
219 IF min>=24 AND min<36 THEN fact=2
220 IF min>=36 AND min<48 THEN fact=3
221 IF min>=48 AND min<=59 THEN fact=4
222 hour=(hour*5)+fact
223 END IF
224 set=0
225 CIRCLE(100,90),69,5,,,1
226 PAINT (100,90),6,5
227 RETURN
228 beeper:
229 beeper=1
230 count=0
231 RETURN
```

The above listing is from a program called Clock. After reading about AmigaBasic Graphics capabilities in a book I decided to attempt a program that uses some graphic calculations. The idea for this program came from the clock utility located on the Workbench. I wanted to see if I could program my own working version. The next thing I thought I might attempt will be to write a calculator program as seen in the Workbench utilities draw. No menus are used in this program as I do not have a very good knowledge of menus and windows at this stage but I hope to be able to incorporate menus in my future programs. Should anyone have some ideas on how to use menus properly I would be pleased to hear from you.

This listing is complete and if anyone wishes to copy this program they will have to delete the numbers which are for reference only. The major problem I had writing this program was the section involving the setting of windows and their types. When I tried to use a window that had a resizing gadget I found that I kept getting an Illegal Function Call error message. I settled for a window that only had a window close gadget and I then had no problems.

Due to an oversight by myself when writing this program, a 60 column screen was used and therefore you will have to choose a sixty column setting on your preferences to have the program run correctly. The program uses the coordinates of (100,90) as the centre of all the circles that are drawn except for the orange dots that mark each hour. AmigaBasic sin and cos commands are given in pi radians and a circle is 2 pi radians hence the numbers used at lines 33 to 44. Two Pi divided by 60 will give a circle that is broken into 60 equal segments and this forms the basis for all the calculations in this program.

Each set of coordinates used to step the hands through each segment of the clock is based on the calculation x coordinate equals the sine of (2 pi divided by 60) multiplied by the radius of the circle and y coordinate equals the cosine of the same equation.

Lines 1 to 53 are to deal with drawing the clock face using the same centre point and using various values for the radius. The initial time setting is taken from the internal clock namely t$. Sec hour and min are different parts of the string and are determined by left$, right$ and mid$.

Lines 54 to 100 are simple line statements and are all drawn from the centre point of 100,90 with a radius of 75. They simply draw the numbers 1 to 12 spaced at 5 unit intervals on the outside of the clock.

Lines 101 to 107 determine when the hour hand should move from one interval to the other. The hour hand must move five intervals for each 60 intervals of the minute hand and therefore each 12 minutes should move the hour hand by one interval. The setalarm routine deals with setting the alarm.

The subroutine digital simply sets the variables hour1 min1 and sec1 for drawing the digital clock, and also determines whether the current time is am or pm.

The subroutine movehands updates the values of sec min and hour. Sixty times a minute for the second hand, sixty times an hour for the minute hand and once every 12 minutes for the hour hand. The subroutine calctime determines the x and y coordinates for the position of the three hands in the clock. The subroutines movesec, movemin, and movehour determine the next position for each hand and then erases the previous positions with the line command drawn in the background color in each subroutine.

The subroutine currtime then redraws all three hands in the new position. Located in this subroutine is the timing device for the clock. I am using the internal timer with an interval of one second, however with the running of the loops in the program this does not give an accurate clock. Experimenting with a simple for next loop would give more accuracy and you then just substitute this for next loop for line 181. Line 182 jumps the program to a beeping routine if the set alarm is equal to the current time.

The subroutine mousehandler draws the square box on the right hand side of the screen with the boxes for setting the time and the alarm. Also this routine draws the digital clock. The set variable contained in lines 188 and 202 are determined by the position of the last mouse click which is in turn determined by lines 109 to 114.

This ends my brief explanation for this program and I hope that some people have gained something from this article.

THE E.T. PROBLEM

In last month's issue of *Cursor* (Random Bits column) we published a programming problem about that mythical 6 fingered creature called E.T. The problem was submitted by Hugh Gravendijk, one of our 8-bit members, but we thought that our Amiga members might as well have a 'crack' at it. Well, as usual, the response has been tremendous - 2 (two) replies (one from an 8 bit user and one from an Amiga user)!

Following is a possible way to solve the problem, submitted by the author (Hugh Gravendijk):

```
100 REM E.T.=EXTRA TERRESTIAL CREATURE
110 REM E.T. HAS ONLY 6 FINGERS, SO HE COUNTS TO BASE 6.
120 REM WHEN E.T. IS 13 YEARS (BASE 10)  OLD
130 REM HE WRITES HIS AGE AS 21 (BASE 6).
140 REM REMARKABLY 21 (REVERSED) + 1=13  (BASE 6).
150 REM E.T.'S EXTRA GALACTIC TELEPHONE  NUMBER HAS THE SAME PROPERTY:
160 REM 5 DIGITS TO BASE 6 REVERSED +1 = THE DECIMAL NUMBER (BASE 10).
170 REM COULD YOU FIND THIS NUMBER?
180 REM       ************
190 REM       *** E.T. ***
200 REM       **** BY ****
210 REM       ** HUBERT **
220 REM       ************
230 REM  A,B,C,D,E (DECIMAL)
240 REM  P,Q,R,S,T (HEXAGONAL)
250 E=0:T=0
260 E=E+1
270 IFE>9THEND=D+1
280 IFE=10THENE=0
290 IFD>9THENC=C+1
300 IFD=10THEND=0
310 IFC>9THENB=B+1
320 IFC=10THENC=0
330 IFB>9THENA=A+1
340 IFB=10THENB=0
350 IFA>9THEN PRINT "TRY AGAIN":END
360 T=T+1
370 IFT>5THENS=S+1
380 IFT=6THENT=0
390 IFS>5THENR=R+1
400 IFS=6THENS=0
410 IFR>5THENQ=Q+1
420 IFR=6THENR=0
430 IFQ>5THENP=P+1
440 IFQ=6THENQ=0
450 IFP>6THENPRINT"TRY AGAIN":END
460 PRINTTAB(2)X;:PRINTTAB(15)Y;:PRINTTAB(30)Z
470 X=A*(10000)+B*(1000)+C*(100)+D*(10)+E
480 Y=P*(10000)+Q*(1000)+R*(100)+S*(10)+T
490 Z=T*(10000)+S*(1000)+R*(100)+Q*(10)+P
500 IFX=Z+1THENGOTO520
510 GOTO260
520 END
```

THE E T. PROBLEM

Here is another possible solution by Allan Casperson of Bardon (the 8-bit solution):

```
BASE 10=  0   4   5   2   3
BASE 6 =  3   2   5   4   0


1 REM LET BASE 6 NO HAVE DIGITS ABCDE
2 REM THEN BASE 10 NO IS EDCBA+1
3 REM USING PLACE VALUES THE BASE 6
4 REM NO HAS THE VALUE OF A*6↑4 + B*6↑3
5 REM + C*6↑2 + D*6 + E
6 REM THE BASE 10 NO HAS THE VALUE OF
7 REM E*10↑4 + D*10↑3 + C*10↑2 + B*10
8 REM + A + 1
9 REM MULTIPLYING AND ADDING GIVES THE
10 REM EQUATION IN LINE 70 EQUAL TO 0
15 OPEN4,4
20 FORA=0TO5
30 FORB=0TO5
40 FORC=0TO5
50 FORD=0TO5
60 FORE=0TO5
70 F=9999*E+994*D+64*C-206*B-1295*A+1
80 IFF=0THENPRINT#4,"BASE 10= ";E;D;C;B;A
90 IFF=0THENPRINT#4,"BASE 6 = ";A;B;C;D;E
100 NEXTE
110 NEXTD
120 NEXTC
130 NEXTB
140 NEXTA
150 REM THE ANSWER IS THE NUMBER BASE 6
151 REM OF 32540
152 REM THE VALUE OF THIS IN BASE 10 IS
153 REM 4524 WHICH IS 04523 + 1
160 END
```

Chris Fama was the only Amiga problem solver. Chris got the right answer, but didn't submit his solution. Did you use Basic, C, or was it just a bit of mental arithmetic, Chris....?

SOFTWARE REVIEWS

AEGIS VIDEO TITLER

by Robert Googe

Here we go again all you Video fanatics – another titling package to look at. Well, you might say, not another flash titling program to add to my collection of "*use-it-a-few-times-get-bored-with-it-put-it-on-the-shelf-never-to-see-the-light-of-day-piece-of-software*"!!. Strangely that's exactly what I was thinking as I stood there in the shop studying it sitting there on the shelf. "Hmmm", I thought to myself, "what can this software do for me that can't be done with all the other stuff I've got at home? (and be useful at the same time)!". Don't you hate it when you have to justify the purchase of software and you can't on the surface but something deep down inside says you need this package! After some considerable thinking (not all of it coherent, I might add), looking through the manuals and having a 'play' with it at in the shop – I decided to buy it and justify it later. (This has to have some Freudian connections with "cute little puppy with sad eyes in petshop window" syndrome.)

Enough garbology – lets see what it does!

The Video Titler package comes in a pale green box, open this and you should find two manuals, an addendum sheet, several sheets of license agreement proclamations, a user registration card, a quick reference card and an envelope containing two disks. This package actually contains two separate programs – the Video Titler program and another program called Special Effects Generator (or SEG). The Video Titler lets you create the title pages with text, backgrounds, visual enhancements, etc. while the SEG is basically a complex, menu driven slideshow generator. The first thing you should do, though, is boot up your Amiga with your workbench and copy the two disks, labelling them "VideoTitler" and "VideoTitlerDataDisk" respectively. This shouldn't be a problem as both disks are not copy protected and full instructions on copying the two programs from the ground up are covered well in the manuals.

The Video Titler program opens with a copyright message and presents you with a blank screen with a cross-hair cursor. From here you can generate screens of text using three different font generations – the standard Amiga font or Polyfonts (a flexible, re-sizeable font that can be placed at any angle and sized, mirrored, etc) or ColorFonts supported by such programs as The Calligrapher (none of which are supplied by Aegis here). Once you have chosen your font and have put in the text you desire , you can then apply one of twenty text special effects from 3D block to neon to shadow effects – all of these effects can also be customised further in Expert Mode.

After creating your page of text, you can then import or generate an IFF background. The background itself can also be manipulated in a multitude of ways from re-colouring to stretching the picture to fit the screen size and resolution you are using. Pictures can be placed under or over current images with or without transparency and can be given a pseudo 3D effect. Inbuilt backgrounds include colour bars and gradation (colour1 to colour2 transition from top to bottom of screen).

Now, after creating a few title pages with Video Titler, you probably would like to tie them together in some sort of orderly presentation. This is where we change over to the Special Effects Generator – SEG. Unlike many other slideshow-type programs, SEG is very easy to use by the novice and experienced user alike, as the whole program is menu driven and does not rely on the creation of text scripts to direct the action.
SEG, like Video Titler, opens with a blank screen after a 10 second display of a copyright notice. The main action is controlled by making up a script from choices via the mouse and menu's. The main actions are loading picture buffers, choosing the way they are displayed and

adding transition effects. The pictures loaded are only restrained by current resolution and number of colours available, palette compatibility between pictures should also be considered for smooth transition effects.

Timing of each segment can be modified in whole seconds excluding transitions and full support of ANIM files (and animation of these) is available.

Transition effects are many and varied, they range from single pixel action to full page flips. The flip is the most simplistic effect, simply changing from one picture to the next in an instant. Next include Fade, Dissolve, Diamonds, Diagonals and nine different wipes. There are also various block movements such as checker-board wipes, dribble wipes, random wipes, etc.

Once you have created a script, it can be played either from within SEG or using the ShowSEG program from the CLI.

Video Titler and SEG Technical aspects:-

> Resolutions available (PAL and NTSC are supported) 320x256, 320x512 (labelled Video Res. and is best for Videowork), 640x256 and 640x512.
> Overscan is available on all resolutions (Video resolution shown here) as Medium (352x552) or Severe (384x592).
> Colours supported - 32 in low and Video res. plus support of extra-halfbright in this mode and 16 in med and hi res. there is NO support of HAM.
> System Requirements - at least 1 Meg of ram with 1.5 to 2 Meg required to utilize full ability of higher resolutions listed above (1.5 Meg works well with all resolutions except overscan in the 640x400 mode).
>
> Good points - easy to use, excellent text renditions and picture manipulation in Video Titler program. SEG is a good presentation program being very easy to use. Supports PAL in overscan and results are very good when transferred to video.
>
> Bad Points - No support of Hold and Modify mode, SEG is a little restrictive (e.g. only two transition speeds - slow and fast) programs such as The Director are much more flexible. Does not support Amiga sound in any way so silent presentations and titles only if you've only got your Amiga.

Last but not least the cost - you will be pleasantly surprised that the package costs less here than it does in the U.S. It is advertised in the U.S. for around US$140 (A$180), I picked up mine from Computer View at Bundamba for $79 (less 5% if you present your CCUG card)! I won't try to start to figure this one out but grab it at this price, if you think you need it, before somebody realizes the mistake. I feel I got good value for money in buying VideoTitler, although I'll probably use The Director in place of SEG to generate my titling.

Happy Animations to all.

P.S. If you do buy it - make sure it's Version 1.1 (the latest!).

-ooOoo-

THE 64 EMULATOR 2

by Dan and Reub Phillips

The 64 Emulator 2 from Readysoft makes your Amiga attempt to imitate a Commodore 64- allowing you to load up and run Commodore 64 software on the Amiga as if it were actually a C64, thereby gaining access to the vast amount of C64 software, or allowing '64 owners to upgrade to an Amiga and not lose their entire software library.

The 64 Emulator 2 is a software package - there is no support hardware (apart from an optional cable which connects C64 peripherals to the Amiga) such as plug in boards or any such thing, so the Emulator could best be described as a software-simulator.
The package can be purchased with or without a serial interface cable. This cable connects from the parallel port of the Amiga to a Commodore 64 disk drive and/or printer. Two different cables are available, one for the Amiga 500/2000 and one for the Amiga 1000. This is because the parallel ports of the machines are physically different.
The cable isn't absolutely necessary however, as Amiga disk drives can be configured to emulate C64 disk drives, and normal Amiga printers can be used. Using a 64 disk drive will increase compatibility though. With C64 printers, only ones which plug into the serial port (the round one) can be used, since there is no user port present (the same goes for modems).

If an Amiga drive is configured to emulate a C64 drive, a file is created on the disk in the specified drive. The file holds the same storage as a standard '64 disk and responds in the same manner as a C64 drive. Multiple amounts of these "disks" can be created on an Amiga disk. The 5¼" Amiga drive (1020) can be used to read directly (but not write to) 1541 disks and similarly, the 3½" Amiga 1010 can read 1581 disks. Or, alternatively, drives can behave in normal AmigaDos fashion. The Emulator also supports some Hard drives and the RAM disk (at least 1 Meg of memory is required though).
The 64 Emulator supports any standard Amiga modem connected to the serial port. The Emulator will not work with any C64 modems designed to plug into the user port. As an added bonus, baud rates of 2400, 4800, 7200, 9600, & 19200 which are not supported by a normal '64 are supported here.
The two control ports can be configured to allow the use of joysticks, the Amiga mouse, or a light pen. The Amiga mouse can act as a 1350 digital mouse, a 1351 proportional mouse, or a set of paddles.
If you have at least 1 Meg of memory, the Emulator can simulate the 64 1764 RAM Expander.

One of the striking differences noticed upon loading the Emulator, is that the border doesn't extend around the screen - only the top and bottom borders are present, the side borders are the same colour as the main screen. This is supposedly because generating a border completely around the screen would slow the program down too much. Which brings us to a very pertinent point - speed.

The 64 Emulator 2 is slow, about two to five times slower in fact. Because of these speed problems, the Emulator can't cope adequately with raster interrupts (split screens). Most games end up as shuddering, flickering, ghosts of their former selves; wordprocessors become sluggish, and BASIC programs become unbearable.
It is not often that sound comes out right either. All sorts of strange noises issue forth.

The 64 Emulator 2 seems to be compatible with most programs (although it doesn't like most fast loaders); that is, they run.... how well they run is another matter.

Also included on the disk is a very useful "transfer" program which is used to transfer files back and forth between '64 and Amiga disks. As well, is a program which allows a C64 serial printer to be used directly from Amiga software.

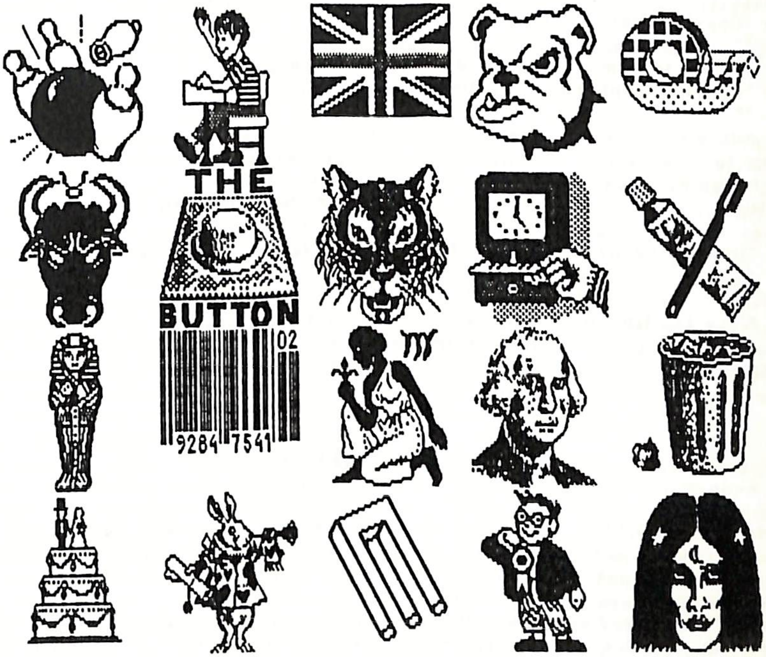
If the Emulator ran faster, it might be worthwhile. But as it stands, it's quite inadequate as a straight substitute for a Commodore 64, although it does have some potential uses.

AN INTERESTING EXERCISE

by Ralph De Vries

If you like using desktop publishing programs, you will, at some stage or another, want to incorporate some 'piccies' in your master piece. This is fine if you are talented and are able to produce your own artwork, but if you are like me you will have to rely on 'Clip Art'. Most DTP programs come with a range of clip art, but usually the selection is rather limited.

For some time I have been taking a close look at the clip art supplied with the PrintMaster program, but I couldn't use it in other programs, because PrintMaster does not store the artwork as standard IFF files. However the other day I chanced upon a program called *FlipBits* which came on TBAG disk no. 19. This told me that it was possible to extract the clip art from PrintMaster and convert it to standard IFF file format and thus make it usable in other programs.



On the PrintMaster disk is a program called 'pmtoiff' which will convert the existing clip art into individual IFF format (medium resolution) pictures. So, I ran the program on both PrintMaster and PrintMaster ArtGallery disks and ended up with over 400 small clip art files. However these were reversed (black was white and vice versa) and that's where the program FlipBits came in, because, as its name implies, it flip the bits and so I ended up with 400 odd positive pictures. To make them easier to access I used DPaint and combined 20 pictures on a page.... it took quite a while! As they stand the pictures can be used in PageSetter or CityDesk - these programs work in the medium resolution mode. However I found that if I loaded them into *BUTCHER II* I could re-save them in hi-res format without altering the dimensions of the original. I can thus use them in Professional Page as well. I have added the disk with these med-res clip art pictures, as well as a second disk with PageSetter and Deluxe Print medium-res clip art to the CCUGQ public domain disk library.

STARTUP-SEQUENCE FOR WP

by Jim Vick

```
cd ram:                  ;make ram current directory
setclock opt load        ;load date - for A500/2000 users with clock
echo ""
addbuffers df0: 10       ;only 10K to conserve memory
addbuffers df1: 10       ; ..  .. ..   ..    ..
makedir ram:t            ;set T directory to ram to speed things up
assign t: ram:t
assign print: wp:        ;make prog look for printer file on df0:
path sys:system add
if exists spell.thes:    ;check if disk in drive
cd df1:                  ;make drive df1: current drive
echo "Copying Main Dictionary to Ram"
echo ""
copy lex.wp to ram:      ;copy dictionary to ram:
echo "Copying Supplementary Dictionary to Ram"
echo ""
copy sup.wp to ram:      ;copy sup dictionary to ram:
assign lex.wp: ram:      ;make prog look in ram for dictionary
assign sup.wp: ram:      ;ditto sup dictionary
cd df0:                  ;change current directory back to df0:
else
echo "Dictionary not Copied to RAM. Will have to be used from Drive df1:"
echo ""
endif
echo "Now Loading Main Program"
WP                       ;load main program
endcli >nil:
```

-ooOoo-

MAIL BOX

As a member of the CCUGQ I have read my Cursor every month, and have never contributed any of my thoughts.... well mainly because I usually have heaps of questions and very few answers. I suppose though, I cannot be that different to the masses. I have no wise words, but I would like to share an experience with you.

Two years ago I purchased an Amiga 1000 after having an affair with a C64. Sounds familiar? I was sold on the graphics, sound, memory-size and the Basic; in fact I thought I could really do things with that Basic. So far so good. Also, I had to have two disk drives. I sort of knew that the system needed it, and boy was I right! Having fiddled a bit I soon realized that 512k was not enough to allow my machine to perform as I knew it could. And was I peeved when the Juggler would not run unless I disconnected my second drive! Yes, well, there is another version that is more memory efficient someone said, but that's not the point is it? Some games also had to be loaded three times before they would run, or switch off. That really annoyed me. I hardly ever play games but the wife and son like to. Ok back to the 64 for games.

A year ago Memory Expansion was available for about 500 dollars - at the time I couldn't afford that - perhaps the price will drop I thought. After all, see how the Amiga has dropped. How wrong can you be? Some time later (like last week) I got sick of reading Guru messages, and disconnecting my beloved second drive. To hell with it. I NEED, NO I MUST HAVE MORE MEMORY. I Wrote to Proton last week. How much is memory? Got a reply too; they phoned me all the way from South Australia. The price of DRAM chips has gone through the roof.

Wouldn't you just know it - par for the course, my course anyway. Throwing caution to the wind, and all my money; yes all of it, I ordered a 2 Megabyte board with Clock and they "gave" me "free" a modified KickStart. The next day it arrived - in a tiny packet - how could it cost so much? That night I installed it, and set the clock. First I rewrote the Startup-sequence, chucked out the date, added ramdos. Ran juggler OK, ran Dpaint in Hi-Res and swapped screens - still OK. I loaded this, then that and also that, still OK. EUREKA!!! At last a system I can do something with.

"Why buy 2 Meg? You will never need all that?" I agree, but I would have agreed that no one could possibly use 64k four years ago. The Amiga is a great machine, but without the memory to go with it very limited. Now for the bit that hurts - Current prices:-

1 Meg $850.00 : 2 Meg $1450.00 : Clock $75.00 : Freight & C.O.D $10.00

---

I had a spot of trouble with my printer the other day. While at work and having a moment spare I enquired as to the price of a new printhead for a Gemini 10 x Star printer. The price is $79.32 from Micronics in Sydney.

I pulled my printer apart that night and was I glad! A good clean and reset was all it needed.

---

When visiting the city I make it a policy to call into B.C.F Bookshop, 107 Elizabeth Street, my main interest being AmigaBasic. On a previous visit I purchased "AmigaBasic Inside and Out" by Abacus (over 500 pages). I am still wading through it; it's packed with goodies that people like me can use to assist them. A great buy even at $49.95, less CCUGQ discount of course. Anyway to continue, on my last visit to the book store I purchased another Abacus book, "Amiga Tricks & Tips". Price 39.95, less CCUGQ discount. Although not quite as thick (340 pages) I consider it a little gold mine for useful hints, or perhaps Tricks and Tips.

For instance: 'Amigabasic and Garbage Collection'. Did you know that every time you crash your basic program, make a change and run it again or resave it, it collects garbage? And as the process continues your program becomes bigger and bigger, without you adding extra code! Amigabasic does not show the garbage in the listings, but it is there. Have you ever written a program and had an error highlighted by that little red box, highlighting nothing at all? I have and it completely mystified me. Well, that's garbage!

To obtain a clean listing follow these steps:-

1) Save your program with the extension, a (inside the basic window, not the requestor box- yes I did that too!). Your program is now a text file and the garbage is gone.

2) Quit AmigaBasic completely typing NEW - this leaves the garbage on the screen, even though you cannot see it.

3) Restart AmigaBasic, load your program and resave it ,b (binary form - "very important" the book says). This may significantly reduce your program size. Remember the worst thing you can do is to save a program in binary form after a test run that results in an error. This is when most garbage is sent to the Basic Interpreter (except when you type it in your self of course, HA! HA!).... Sorry about that!

Finally, if your program will not run, it may not be you - repeat 'may'. It could be a memory error, or even an error in AmigaBasic itself. Now I never thought of that.

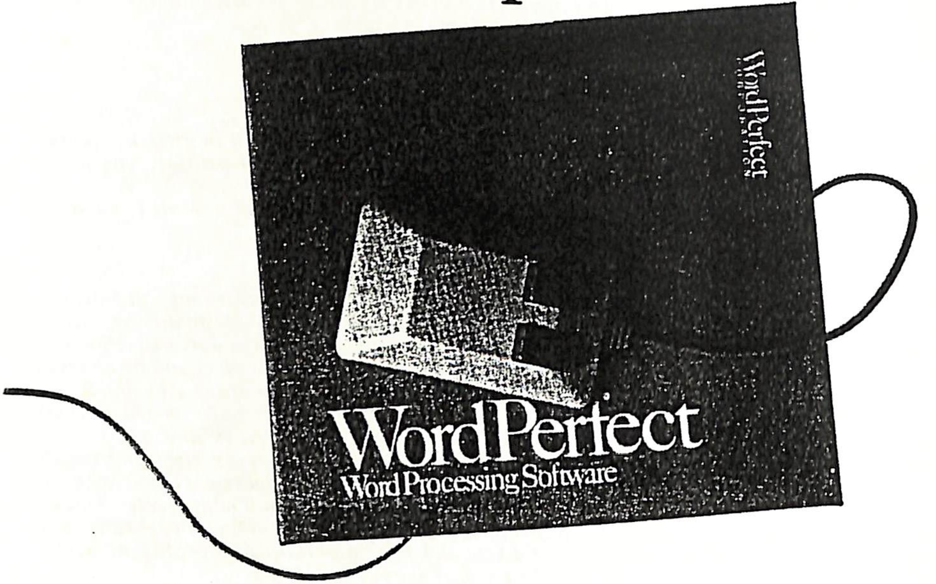
There are stacks of goodies in this book some beyond me but I am still learning; but than aren't we all?

Alan J. Hill

Thanks for your very useful information and tips, Alan. We are on the lookout for cheaper memory, but as yet without success. The books in question will be purchased for our library real soon now!

Yours is exactly the sort of information that we need to pass on to all our members. Keep up the good work! [Ed.]

The start of a perfect friendship.



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Address all Newsletter Mail to: *The Editor "CURSOR", PO BOX 384, ASHGROVE, QLD, 4060.*
Deadline for the December issue is FRIDAY 28th OCTOBER!
Current Page Format: 58 Lines - 90 Characters per Line.

Address all other mail (including Library Material) to:
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Published by: COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.
P.O. Box 274, Springwood, Qld, 4127

Printed by: BANA SERVICES
36 Nerine St., Kingston, Qld, 4114.

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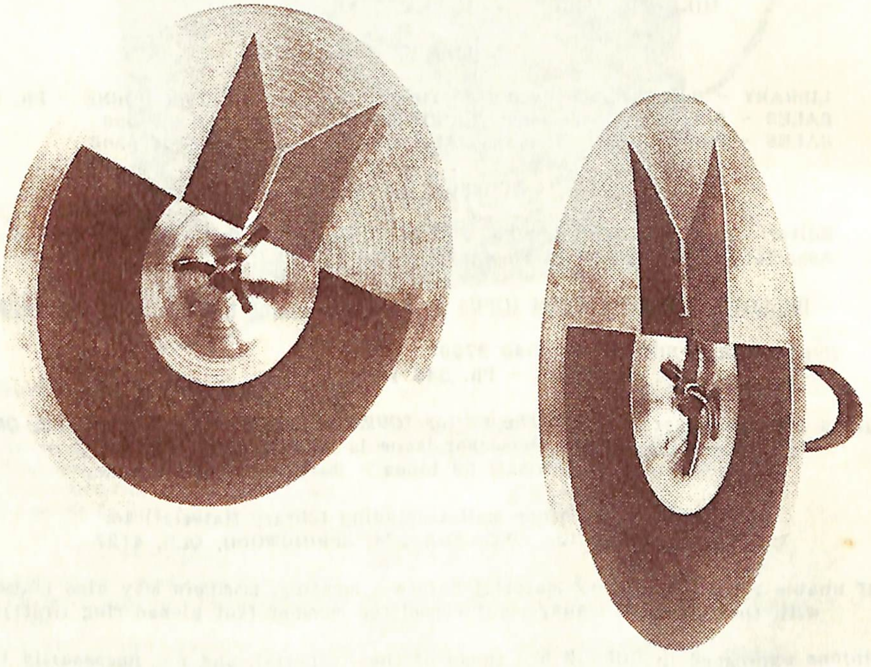

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